



MICHELA NEGRINI
[dip] contemporary art

GERALDO DE BARROS. CONCRETE VISIONS

Galleria Michela Negrini, Lugano

Exhibition: 06.11. 2025 - 31.01.2026

Michela Negrini is delighted to present
Geraldo de Barros. CONCRETE VISIONS

Brazilian painter, photographer and designer, Geraldo de Barros (1923 - 1998) also worked in engraving, graphic arts, and industrial design.

He was a leader of the concrete art movement in Brazil, cofounding Grupo Ruptura and was known for his trailblazing work in experimental abstract photography and modernism. Since the mid '50's he was also active as a designer of furniture (Unilabor), where he devoted himself until the late '80's (Hobjeto).

The exhibition features a selection of photographs from the 1940's, and silk-screen prints.

Geraldo de Barros moved from geometry to pop art, from industrial design to photography. Influenced by concrete art and constructivist movement, he changed his view on representation of reality and applied new rules. Just over twentyfive years after his passing, his works are accompanying us along a path that not only shows the use of different means and techniques, but also goes beyond spatial boundaries.



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The exhibition

Remaining an indisputable pioneer of abstract photography, the exhibition shows a selection of his series of photographs 'Fotoformas' (1946-1951) in which de Barros experimented with a variety of techniques: solarization, manipulation of the image, drawing with ink on negatives, and multiple exposures.

Geraldo de Barros was twenty-eight years old when Fotoforma opened at MASP. Many images reflect the formal modern repertoire: close-up or low-angle shots. His experimentation was widespread, but predominantly abstract, showing his interest in texture and geometric form.

The series *Jogos de Dados* pays homage to Stéphane Mallarmé and reflects de Barros's lifelong exploration of the relationship between art and society. From geometry to pop art, and from photography to industrial design, his work consistently challenged conventional representations of reality. The dice motif encapsulates a spirit of experimentation and the utopian vision that defined his artistic journey.

The new and original serigraphs, *Form- Objects* features a selection of original serigraphs. Though markedly different in form and period, all the works express a shared visual vocabulary rooted in continuous interconnections between art and society.

Geraldo de Barros

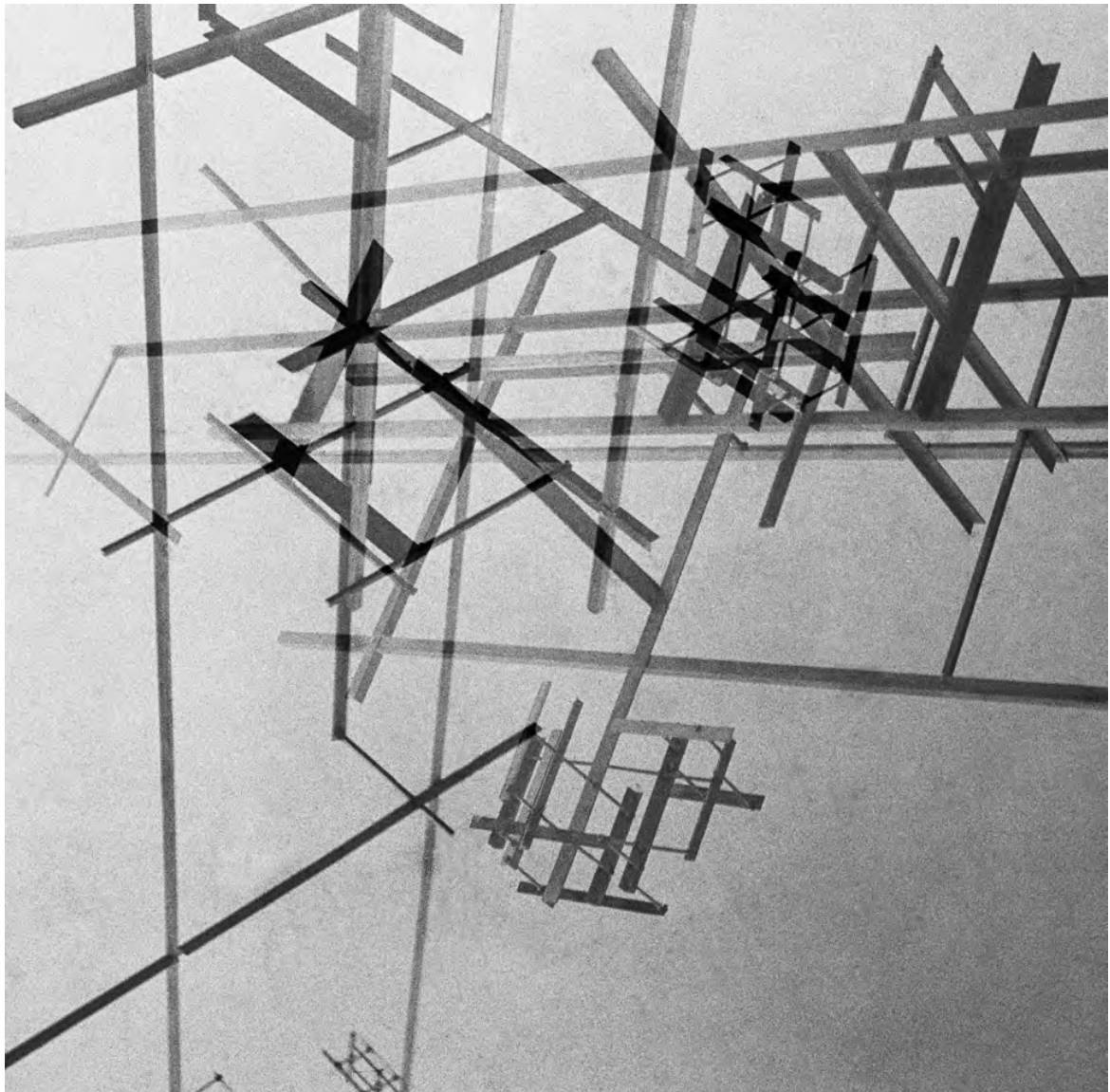
Geraldo de Barros was born in São Paulo in 1923 and lived there until his death in 1998. He started his career as a traditional painter, but began an intense period of experimentation with the photographic medium in 1946. Invited by a friend to photograph soccer teams, de Barros's first camera was built from a kit. Intrigued by the medium, he soon lost interest in pursuing commercial photography. He built a small photo studio and bought a 1939 Rolleiflex and, in 1949, he joined the Foto Cine Club Bandeirante, which was one of the few forums for the city's photography enthusiasts. Members of the group were interested in pictorial photography and de Barros's explorations of abstraction were met with little interest; his photographs were almost never included in the club's exhibitions. Indeed, de Barros's work from this period is characterized by scraped negatives, multiple exposures, and an interest in chance occurrences. He met art critic Mario Pedrosa and became interested in Gestalt theory and occupational therapy. Adon Peres writes, "The experience was to prove crucial for Geraldo, opening the way to far-ranging considerations on figure and form in relation to freedom of representation. Geraldo's work, likewise, took on an ethical and human dimension that it was to retain throughout his life." In 1950, the Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand (MASP) invited him to exhibit his photographs, and he showed a selection from his Fotoformas series. The exhibition led to a fellowship opportunity to study abroad in Europe, more precisely to study engraving in Paris. Ironically, his studies in Europe would redirect his artistic work away from photography. While traveling, he studied painting and printmaking, and met important artists and theorists including Max Bill, Giorgio Morandi, and Francois Morellet, as well as encountering key movements in art and design. In 1952, de Barros returned to Brazil, and he became a central figure in São Paulo's Concrete art movement. Interested in industrial design and modernization processes, he founded a collectivist furniture factory, Unilabor, in 1954. "(He) became interested in concepts such as the industrialization of the artistic gesture, the reproducibility of works of art, and, as a natural progression, in design and graphic art," Peres writes. His work was included in the 1956 Exposição Nacional de Arte Concreta in São Paulo and in the 1960 exhibition *konkrete Kunst, 50 Jahre Entwicklung*, organized by Max Bill in Zürich. In the mid-1960s, he left Unilabor and founded Hobjeto furniture factory. He also became interested in the social criticisms offered by Pop Art; in 1964, he showed figurative paintings with Nelson Leirner. Although internationally known for his innovations in photography, de Barros actively worked with the medium only during two periods of his life: 1945-1951, and 1996-1998. In 1993, his photographs from the earlier period were shown at the Musée de l'Élysée in Lausanne. This series of work, called the Fotoformas, drew from the techniques of engraving and collage. De Barros made montages, superimposing images from the urban landscape of São Paulo over geometric forms. In failing health in the late 1990s, he returned to photography, creating a series of work called Sobras, in which he used family photographs as his support for collage, montage, and new geometric explorations.



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Geraldo de Barros's works are included in numerous important collections, such as Chateaubriand Museum of Art, Brazil; Cisneros-Fontanals Art Foundation (CIFO), Miami, FL, USA; Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros, New York, NY, USA; Contemporary Art Museum, Grenoble, France; Contemporary 3 Art Museum of São Paulo, MAC-USP, Brazil São Paulo Assis; Curitiba Museum, Parana, Brazil; Elysée Museum, Lausanne, Switzerland; Ludwig Museum, Cologne, Germany; Max Bill Collection, Zürich, Switzerland; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH), Houston, TX, USA; Museum of Image and Sound, São Paulo, Brazil; Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, NY, USA; and Pinacoteca of the State of São Paulo, Brazil, among others

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Geraldo de Barros
Untitled, from the series "Fotoformas"
1949 -1951
Gelatin silver print /modern print
30 x 40 cm
Edition of 15



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Geraldo de Barros
Untitled, from the series "Jogos de Dados"
1989-2016
Silk -print on Fabriano 300gr. paper
74 x 74 cm

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